



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA HONORS HOMEBUILDERS, DENVER OSHA WITH "REGFAIR INNOVATION AWARD"

WASHINGTON – The Regulatory Fairness Program of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has awarded its RegFair Innovation award to two Denver-based organizations which pioneered a pilot program that helps small home building companies in Denver to more easily comply with federal regulations, while easing their chances of being fined or penalized. The Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Denver (HBA) and the Region VIII office of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) today received recognition from RegFair for their pilot program, called Homesafe.

Homesafe includes a pocket guide that summarizes OSHA regulations for quick and easy reference by builders. The guide simplifies thousands of pages of OSHA regulations in 70 pages of clear, understandable pictures.

"This kind of innovative approach is exactly what we're looking for in the RegFair program," said SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez. **"It's an excellent way to help small businesses comply with the law, while reducing the burden federal regulations can sometimes have on their day-to-day operations."**

In return for their good faith efforts to follow the principles described in the pocket guide, OSHA will not issue citations to participating home builders for non-serious violations, provided the problem is corrected within a reasonable time.

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Speaking at a Capitol Hill luncheon for Members of Congress and small business leaders from across the country during SBA's annual celebration of Small Business Week, Peter W. Barca, National Ombudsman for RegFair, said that according to OSHA, the cooperative pilot program will soon be expanded to the rest of the country, and lays the groundwork for other joint efforts between small businesses and the federal agencies that regulate them.

Barca and RegFair board member Warren Toltz, who owns a chain of dry cleaners, have begun discussions with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on ways to duplicate the success of the Homesafe program for the dry cleaning industry in Denver.

"Small businesses can be easily overwhelmed by the number and complexity of the federal regulations governing their industries. It is refreshing to see that some federal agencies are taking steps that make it easier for small businesses to comply with the law," Barca said.

In presenting the Innovation Award, Barca noted that the HBA and OSHA also agreed to a "working forum" that will enable OSHA to work with the home building community to design and implement effective methods and procedures to resolve ongoing issues.

"The National Ombudsman and Regulatory Fairness Boards salute the Homebuilders Association and the Denver OSHA office for working together to make the regulatory environment in Denver a little friendlier," Barca said.

Tommy Thompson, former President of the National Association of Home Builders of the U.S. accepted the award for HBA. Dave Herstedt, Safety Specialist in the Region VIII OSHA Office, will accept the award for OSHA's Denver Office.

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